

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01
TRSE-00 DHA-02 MCT-01 /087 W
-----110804Z 034888 /15/70

R 092149Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3927
INFO ALL EC CAPITALS
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
USMISSION GENEVA

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y F O R T E X T

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PLAB, FR
SUBJECT: THE REIMS AFFAIR II

REF: PARIS 16596

1. SUMMARY: IN THE WAKE OF THE VIOLENCE AT REIMS,
THE CGT, APPARENTLY FOR POLITICAL REASONS, IS DOING
ITS UTMOST TO COOL THE LOCAL SITUATION WHILE MAIN-
TAINING A PROPAGANDA INITIATIVE. END SUMMARY.

2. FOLLOWING THE EPISODE AT REIMS (SEE REFTEL) THE
CGT-CFDT-FEN ALLIANCE DENOUNCED BOTH THE GOVERNMENT
AND EMPLOYERS ASSOCIATION AS BEING, IN EFFECT, MORALLY
RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEATH OF THE STRIKER AND ASKED
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FOR AN APPOINTMENT WITH THE PRIME MINISTER TO PUT
FORWARD THEIR DEMAND THAT NOT ONLY THE CFT, BUT THE
GAULLIST "PARA MILITARY" SAC AS WELL, BE DISSOLVED.
CONSIDERABLE MEDIA ATTENTION WAS DEVOTED TO THESE
DEMANDS, TOGETHER WITH SOME BRIEF PASSING REFERENCE
TO THE APPARENTLY RELATED MINOR BOMBING ATTACKS ON
CITROEN AND SIMCA FACTORIES IN PARIS AND ELSEWHERE.

3. MORE INTERESTING THAN ALL THIS PUBLICITY, HOWEVER, WAS THE SUDDEN BACKING OFF OF THE CGT IN REIMS FROM ITS CONFRONTATION WITH THE STRUCK COMPANY WHERE THE INCIDENT OCCURRED. AT FIRST, THE CGT UNION HAD REFUSED THE COMPANY'S POST-INCIDENT OFFER OF SETTLEMENT; THEN PROPOSED THAT TERMS BE PUT UP FOR A SECRET VOTE BY THE MEMBERSHIP; AND THEN, PRECIPITOUSLY, ANNOUNCED THAT THE OFFER WOULD BE ACCEPTED, BECAUSE THE WORKERS HAD ALREADY EXPRESSED THEIR AGREEMENT ANYWAY. INITIALLY, THERE WAS RANK AND FILE ANGER OVER THE CGT'S ABOUT FACE, BUT THE WORKERS ARE GOING ALONG AND WILL RETURN TO WORK AFTER THE FUNERAL OF THEIR COLLEAGUE.

4. IN DISCUSSING THE REIMS AFFAIR WITH ONE OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S LABOR ADVISORS, WE WERE TOLD THAT GOVERNMENT BELIEVES THAT THE COMMUNIST PARTY, FRIGHTENED OF POSSIBLY DANGEROUS POLARIZATION IF THE CGT MAKES TOO MUCH OF THE AFFAIR AT THE GRASS ROOTS LEVEL, HAS PUT THE BRAKES ON AS WITNESS THE SUDDEN CGT SHIFT ON THE SIGNING OF THE AGREEMENT. THE COMMUNISTS, IN THE MATIGNON'S JUDGMENT, WISH TO BE SELECTIVELY AGGRESSIVE ON THE LOCAL LEVEL (E.G. THE REIMS STRIKE BEFORE THE KILLING) WHILE DOING NOTHING WHICH MIGHT PROVOKE GENUINE, AND POLITICALLY DANGEROUS, UNREST. THE CGT, NATURALLY, IS DISCIPLINED AND WILL FOLLOW ORDERS. THE UNKNOWN FACTOR IS WHAT THE FAR MORE UNPREDICTABLE CFDT MIGHT DO AT THE LOCAL LEVEL.

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5. LOOKING AHEAD TO ANY POSSIBLE EMBARRASSMENT WHICH MAY ATTACH ITSELF TO THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY AS THE CFT AND ITS RELATIONS WITH SOME OF THE BIG AUTO COMPANIES ARE INCREASINGLY SUBJECTED TO CLOSE PUBLIC SCRUTINY, THE PRIME MINISTER'S AIDE ONLY NOTED THAT THE (FRENCH GOVERNMENT OWNED) RENAULT COMPANY HAD KEPT ITSELF FREE FROM ANY SUCH INVOLVEMENT. ORIGINALLY, HE SAID, RENAULT HAD FOUND IT USEFUL TO HAVE AN UNDERSTANDING WITH THE CGT, BUT IN RECENT YEARS, DUE TO THE CFDT'S SUCCESS IN ORGANIZING THE FOREIGN WORKERS, THE COMPANY HAD FOUND IT USEFUL TO REORIENT ITSELF IN THAT DIRECTION.

6. THIS SAME OFFICIAL WAS ALSO ABLE TO TELL US, ON THE BASIS OF HIS ACCESS TO THE POLICE REPORTS ON THE INCIDENT, THAT AS SUSPECTED THE CRIME WAS UNPREMEDITATED AND FUELED BY ALCOHOL: THE FIVE ARRESTED MEN HAD SPENT THE DAY DRINKING HEAVILY. THEY WERE ANNOYED

BY THE CGT STRIKERS' HOLDING A PARTY ON THE PICKET-LINE AND WERE STILL BROODING OVER THE LOCAL COMMUNIST VICTORY AT THE MARCH MUNICIPAL ELECTION. IN THIS CONDITION THEY DROVE UP, TRIED TO STEAL A BANNER FROM THE PICKETS AND WERE SOUNDLY BEATEN AND HAD THEIR CAR DAMAGED FOR THEIR TROUBLE. ENRAGED, THEY WENT OFF, GOET TWO SMALL CALIBRE RIFLES, AND RETURNED AND SHOT AT THE STRIKERS' FEET. IT WAS RICHOCHETING BULLETS THAT CAUSED THE DEATH AND THE INJURIES. LITTLE OF THIS KIND OF BACKGROUND, HOWEVER, IS REACHING THE PUBLIC.

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y FOR TEXT

7. COMMENT: WE SHARE THE MATIGNON'S ANALYSIS OF THE REASONS FOR THE SUDDEN AND ALMOST INDECENT HASTE WITH WHICH THE CFT HAS SETTLED THE REIMS STRIKE (WHICH ITSELF IS AN INSTRUCTIVE EXAMPLE -- FOR THOSE WHO STILL NEED ONE -- OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE CGT AND A GENUINE TRADE UNION). HOPEFULLY, OUR FRIENDS' RELUCTANCE TO VOLUNTEER ANY COMFORTING OPINION ON WHAT MIGHT COME OUT A REVIEW OF THE CFT'S RELATIONS WITH THE AUTO COMPANIES IS NOT AS OMINOUS AS IT

SEEMS. HOWEVER, THE CFT HAS ANNOUNCED THE RESIGNATION
OF GENERAL SECRETARY BLANC AND THE CONVENING OF A
SPECIAL CONGRESS; THE PRESS IS BEGINNING TO
FOCUS ITS ATTENTION OF THAT ORGANIZATION'S RELATIONS
WITH CITROEN; AND THE COMMUNISTS ARE
CLAIMING A TIE-IN BETWEEN THE CFT AND BOTH THE
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SAC AND THE RPR.
GAMMON

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Message Attributes

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